

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Jack O. Banta, Co-Chair; Lydia Martinez, Co-Chair; Michelle Lyons, Richard DeJesus, Rev. Mary McBride-Lee

OTHERS: Council Member Enrique Torres, Council Member Patricia Swain, Angie Staltaro, Neighborhood Revitalization Relocation Coordinator; Christine Smith, Central Grants Director; Renu Gupta, Grants Writer; August Hurst, Grants Writer; Bill Coleman, OPED Neighborhood Development Director; Jorge Garcia, Public Facilities Director; Erin McDonough, Mayor's Office; Adam Heller, IT Director; Todd McClutchy, Crescent Crossing Developers

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Banta called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Committee Minutes of December 16, 2014.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED THE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2014.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2014 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

186-13 Proposed Resolution regarding Reservoir Neighborhood Revitalization Zone-By-Laws and Boundaries Plan.

Ms. Staltaro came forward and said that this was the eighth NRZ that was being established. She then requested that the NRZ members present raise their hands. There were 8 NRZ members present.

Council Member Swain joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

The president then gave a brief overview of the formation of the NRZ from the PowerPoint handout. She said that there had been problems in the past at Reservoir Avenue and the NRZ will be looking to make things safer.

Council Member Martinez asked if the bylaws had been approved. Ms. Staltaro said that the by-laws had been submitted to the State and there were no modifications of those by-laws needed.

Council Member Banta asked for clarification on the boundaries. He was told that it was outlined in the blue area in the information packet. They have also been in contact with the

Trumbull Gardens residents. In the early planning stages, there was a meeting with the Trumbull Gardens residents.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that this had been in the works for a long time and she was pleased that it had come this forward. She said that this would help to improve the neighborhood.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 186-13 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING RESERVOIR NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ZONE-BY-LAWS AND BOUNDARIES PLAN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR AGENDA ITEM 186-13 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING RESERVOIR NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ZONE-BY-LAWS AND BOUNDARIES PLAN BEFORE THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING IF NEEDED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

167-13 Proposed request that the City Establishes a Moratorium of future Tax Abatements, Expansions or Proliferation on any not-for-profit organizations.

Council Member Lyons said that no one from the City Attorney's office was present. Council Member Torres said that the Committee could make any changes to the resolution. Council Member Martinez said that this had been tabled three times and that the Committee should vote on it.

Council Member DeJesus said that there appears to have been a miscommunication about who would be contacting the attorney. He said that the Committee should have contacted the City Attorney's Office because some of the people would be uncomfortable voting on this without counsel guidance. Council Member Torres said that the City Attorney had been at the second meeting and that the attorney had claimed it would harm the non-profits. He said that he objected to the 30 year abatements simply because the residents don't know what these type of abatements cost the tax payers. Council Member Swain said that the attorney that had attended last time had not helped the Council Members understanding the issues, and just attacked the language of the resolution. She said that while tabling the item is frustrating, just voting it down would be a negative thing that does not need to happen. Council Member Torres said that the Mayor does not want this resolution to go forward. He asked if it was a valid point to ask if the abatements are costing the taxpayers. This should be relevant to the Council Members that the projects should be reducing the taxpayers' burden, not adding to it.

Council Member Lyons suggested that Council Member Torres clean up the language and send it to the Committee Members for review. Then the questions can be sent to the City Attorney's for answers. Council Member Martinez said that she would also like to have someone from OPED to be present at the next meeting because the abatements are not flat 0%, but there is an increasing scale with numbers attached.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she would like to know more about this. She said that she was tired of people coming to Bridgeport with their hands out.

Council Member Torres said that the goal would be to explain to the tax payers whether this is hitting them in the wallet or not. Council Member Martinez said that one of the reasons that the Council was tabling this was out of respect.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 167-13 PROPOSED REQUEST THAT THE CITY ESTABLISHES A MORATORIUM OF FUTURE TAX ABATEMENTS, EXPANSIONS OR PROLIFERATION ON ANY NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

182-13 Grant Submission: re Department of Interior - National Park Services, Land & Water Conservation Fund Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program-Johnson Oak Park Development Project. (#15462).

Ms. Gupta came forward along with Mr. Layton, Mr. Garcia and a representative from the Trust for Public Land. Ms. Gupta said that the City was in a partnership with the Trust for Public Land at Johnson Oak Park. This will require matching funds.

Mr. Garcia said that there would be two parcels that would be transformed. One is a Parks parcel and one is a school parcel. With the recent consolidation, it is easier to manage these types of parcels. When the park is transformed, it will be easier to handle.

Council Member DeJesus had several questions about how this would be managed. Mr. Garcia gave a brief overview. Council Member Martinez said that she had a problem with the fact that both the City and the School would manage this. She said that there had been a public perception that the City does not give the BOE enough money. Council Member DeJesus said that he had strong concerns about how the cost will be split between the City and the BOE. Mr. Garcia said that the department was now tracking the cost of the various items, from littering to travel and then this would be analyzed. Council Member McBride Lee said that she did not want to see this added to the City's budget as an in-kind service for the BOE. Discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 182-13 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR - NATIONAL PARK SERVICES, LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND OUTDOOR RECREATION LEGACY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM-JOHNSON OAK PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. (#15462).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10-14 Grant Submission: re National Endowments for Arts-Art Works Program for a Bridgeport Arts Fest Grant Program. (#15454)

Ms. Gupta gave a brief overview of the project. There will be matching funds, required, \$15,000 from the City and some from the private groups. The City had been putting \$15,000 into the festival already. Each year there are over 100 Bridgeport artists participate and the local businesses support this. Council Member DeJesus asked if the grant would impact the community positively. Ms. McDonough explained that this would allow more funds to go to advertising.

Council Member Martinez asked if it was a one day or two day event. Ms. Gupta said that it would be discussed. It is held on McLevy Green. Council Member Banta asked if the artists were charged a small fee of \$30.00, which is significantly lower than the SoNo Arts Festival. Council Member DeJesus asked if there were scholarships for the articles. Ms. McDonough said that they have a referral program. Council Member Martinez reminded everyone that the City already financially supports this event.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 10-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE NATIONAL ENDOWMENTS FOR ARTS-ART WORKS PROGRAM FOR A BRIDGEPORT ARTS FEST GRANT PROGRAM. (#15454)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

13-14 Grant Submission: re State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection America the Beautiful (ATB) Grant Program.

Ms. Smith came forward and introduced Ms. Autumn Hurst, a new grant writer. This grant will be for planting 50 trees. Council Member DeJesus pointed out that the in-kind was more than the grant itself. Ms. Hurst gave a brief overview of this.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 13-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL (ATB) GRANT PROGRAM.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

16-14 Grant Submission: re State Department of Office of Policy and Management regarding Nutmeg Network Grant Program.

Ms. Gupta gave a brief summary of the grant. Mr. Heller, the IT Director, said that the State would allow City Hall to connect to the State network at the nearest portal via fiber optics. He reviewed the details with the Commission and pointed out that the service costs would be less than what the City was paying now.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 16-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE STATE DEPARTMENT OF OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT REGARDING NUTMEG NETWORK GRANT PROGRAM.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

19-14 Grant Submission: re Arbor Day Foundation for TD Green Streets Grant Program. (#15347)

Ms. Christine Smith, the Central Grants Director, presented the application and said that this would be for GroundWorks Bridgeport to establish a small tree nursery. It will provide trees to the residents at cost. GroundWorks is working with OPED to identify a parcel.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 19-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION FOR TD GREEN STREETS GRANT PROGRAM. (#15347).**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

20-14 Grant Submission: re State of Connecticut Department of Housing Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Tranche 2 Application for Public Facilities, Infrastructure and Planning. (#15463)

Ms. Smith, the Central Grants Director, gave the details of the grant for installing generators at five schools including Holland. Cross, Hooker, and Madison. Mr. Garcia said that he had spoken to Mr. Sherwood about this and that Mr. Sherwood said that the matching \$200,000 would come from Capital. Council Member Lyons pointed out that this should be paid for from the BOE. Mr. Garcia said that the schools are emergency evacuation locations, so the City takes the buildings over. Council Member Martinez asked if the other schools already had emergency generators. Mr. Garcia said that this was so. During Superstorm Sandy, Batallia had over 400 people there. The BOE currently maintains the generators.

Council Member Lyons left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Discussion followed. Council Member Martinez expressed concerns about the maintenance of the generators. Mr. Garcia said that they are routinely checked.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 20-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT DISASTER RECOVERY (CDBG-DR) TRANCHE 2 APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING. (#15463)**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

22-14 Proposed Resolution Authorizing Capital Funding for the Historic Renovation of the Mary and Eliza Freeman Homes Located at 354 and 360 Main Street.

Mr. Bill Coleman, the OPED Neighborhood Development Director, came forward and said that there had been a request to withdraw this item.

23-14 Proposed Resolution Authorizing a Tax Incentive Agreement for Crescent Crossings II Project, a 84-unit Mixed-Income, Affordable Housing Development, located at 252 Hallett Street and Ordering a Public Hearing relative to same.

Mr. Bill Coleman, the OPED Neighborhood Development Director, came forward and explained that he was going to ask the Commissioners to vote to accept an amended the resolution with a change in the length of the Tax Incentive Agreement.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ACCEPT AN AMENDED RESOLUTION BY SUBSTITUTION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Coleman said that he liked the fact that this project was cross district. There are numerous policy issues involved and Phase 1 has already been approved. Copies of various articles about Crescent Crossing from the newspapers.

Mr. Todd McClutchy said the financing has been secured and is a long term, low interest loan. This will have a total of 4 units for veterans as part of the second phase of 84 units. McBride had several concerns about the cost of the various units. She also wished to know of Bridgeport residents would be employed during the construction phase. Mr. Coleman said that the only projects that have longer abatements are the ones that include either public housing or affordable housing. Mr. McClutchy explained that because the rents are tied directly to the income level of the resident, it has to be tied to the property taxes.

Regarding the employment of Bridgeport residents, Mr. McClutchy explained that Ms. Caviness had already been engaged to help with recruitment.

Council Member DeJesus said that he was concerned about the fact that when the project is completed, there will only be 8 units for veterans. He said that he felt that there should be more room for accommodation of the veterans. Mr. McClutchy said that his company would reach out to the Veteran's Office about the need for the future phases.

Council Member Martinez pointed out that the Council had already voted for the 93 units that had not been started and she would not be voting for this.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she appreciated the fact that the developers would be having minority contractors involved. Council Member DeJesus said that the developer was required by law to have the minorities included.

Mr. Coleman pointed out that the project that had been approved would be breaking ground in the spring. The 40 yrs abatement was necessary for the project. However, because these units involve deeply affordable rents, the time line has to be longer. Mr. McClutchy said that the base line was to have a higher and higher threshold. Discussion followed.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM AS AMENDED.**

**** THE MOTION FAILED DUE TO LACK OF SECOND.**

Council Member Martinez said that the project was going to bring more children to the school. She added that the senior centers were on top of one another. She said that the train station will provide the developers with renters. The developer should have more veterans units and have a senior center in the project.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 23-14 PROPOSED RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TAX INCENTIVE AGREEMENT FOR CRESCENT CROSSINGS II PROJECT, A 84-UNIT MIXED-INCOME, AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, LOCATED AT 252 HALLETT STREET AND ORDERING A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO SAME.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS MOVED TO SCHEDULE A SPECIAL MEETING WITH THE DEVELOPER TO DISCUSS THE VARIOUS ISSUES RAISED BY THE COUNCIL MEMBERS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Service